



Hampton Mayor's Committee For People with Disabilities

NEWSLETTER



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Jeanne E. Smith, Contributing Editor



Front Row- Ernest Ferguson, Mary Fountain, Ellen Shackelford, Susan Merryfield, Jane Hobbs,
Mae Murray, David Braunbeck

Back row- Lynn Lesko, Patricia Brown, Joy Richards, Larry Townsend, Fred Thaggard,
Warren Mills, Jeanne Smith, Story Smith, Barbara Stewart, Elizabeth Salter, LaVerne Johnson



In October of 2015, the Committee celebrates its 36th year of helping the disabled in Hampton.

On our 36th Anniversary, little did I realize that when I volunteered to be the staff liaison to our Committee in 1979 how much good and benefit it would bring to both our disabled and able bodied communities. There have been so many barriers and voids breeched and so much new awareness raised during the years of the committee's awareness. Kudos should be given to Former Mayor Charlie Wornom for his foresight in creating the Committee and for the leaderships rendered thru the years by volunteers like Steve Capo, Phil Everhart and Jeannie and Story Smith. Because there is still much to be done to assure equal access and equal opportunity, we will continue to press on until all the goals and objectives are met.

George E. Wallace
Mayor, City of Hampton

HONORED AWARDEES HELPING THE DISABLED IN 2014



HONORED EMPLOYEE is Jennifer Hilton, who works for Eggleston and has demonstrated progressive performance and continues to improve every day. She is adaptable and steps up where ever she is needed. There is always a smile and willingness to get the job done. Jennifer is EXCELLENCE IN ACTION!!!!

HONORED EMPLOYEE IS Eli Smallwood, Sr., who works at the Ft. Eustis Exchange Food Court and receives support from VersAbility Resources. Eli has proven that people with disabilities can return to the work force after an extended time away and truly excel!! He is to be commended for his positive attitude and commitment to exceeding his job expectations.



HONORED EMPLOYEE IS Darchelle Williams, who works at the VA Hospital in Hampton. After working at the Hospital for less than a year, she was promoted to the Lead position due to her excellent customer service. She answers all calls promptly and routes callers to the appropriate person with skill and ease.

HONORED EMPLOYEE IS Dellanira Delleon, who is an employee in VersAbility's electronics recycling program and supervises high school students in the Transition to Work program. DD began working with VersAbility as part of the shelf stocking team at the Langley Air Force Base Commissary and then moved to the e-recycling program at VersAbility's Hampton site. She quickly impressed her supervisors with her skills and knowledge and they created the lead position for her. She is excelling in her position and should be recognized for her hard work.





HONORED EMPLOYER is Synerject-- Their focus is to produce gasoline engine management systems and components to the marine, motorcycle and recreation industry manufacturers. Synerject has worked with Eggleston to employ people with disabilities and actively have gone above and beyond to assist in enhancing the workplace to enable our employees to accomplish the work requested.

HELPING HANDS IS Jack Ezzel, a member of VersAbility's Board of Directors since 2008. He is an enthusiastic outspoken advocate for creating jobs for people with disabilities and uses his time, talents and extensive list of contacts to encourage the community to support citizens with disabilities. When Zel Technologies sponsored one of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra's concerts, he made sure people with disabilities received free tickets to enjoy the performance.



HELPING HANDS IS Shaheerah Crawley, who is a driver for MV Transportation Services. She not only does her job well, but also goes beyond expected services. She is always pleasant, friendly and helpful. She is VERY sensitive to the needs of the disabled and seems to have a natural understanding of what is needed, especially for the blind and visually impaired.

HONORED EMPLOYEE IS Jamar A. Bradley, who has worked at McDonalds ever since he graduated from High School in 2008. He was on a work Training program at Hampton High School where he learned job skills and was the TOP Student of the Year and won several awards. He only works at McDonalds on Saturday now, but enjoys his job and duties - the Managers are very helpful and kind to him.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

If someone is too tired to give you a smile, leave one of your own, because no one needs a smile as much as those who have none to give.

Tips to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of crime

A physical disability—impaired vision, hearing or mobility—doesn't prevent you from being a victim of crime. Common sense actions can reduce your risk. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you are either at home or out and about.

*Stay alert and "tuned in" to your surroundings

*Be realistic about your limitations. Avoid places that can put you at risk

*Install peep holes on your front and back doors at YOUR eye level---especially important if you use a wheelchair.

*Carry your purse close to your body, not dangling from the straps.

*Always carry medical information with you in case of emergency

Ask the Police department to conduct a free home security survey to help identify your individual needs.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, SUSAN MERRYFIELD

2015 is well on its way and 2014 is a blur for many of us. As the Mayor's Committee looks forward, I have reviewed the goals of the Committee, and we are committed to providing community education and increasing the visibility of the disabled within the Community. While committed to this mission, it has become necessary to look at the continuity of the Committee. The Committee membership is large in number, and for that we are grateful, but now the Committee must look to find those willing to lead the Committee as it progresses with its mission. Mayor's Committees across the country and in Hampton Roads area are disbanding, not because there is no work to be done, but because there is a lack of leadership to support and carry out the goals that are set.

I applaud the current members of the Committee and their commitment to the community. I think you will see the commitment as you read this issue and see the celebration notes from the Mayor's Luncheon. I am asking for everyone to look to see if there is a possibility of active participation in the Mayor's Committee and to come forward and become leaders for the group.

Reminder...

The Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities meets the 2nd Thursday of every month (except July and December) from 3:00PM to 5:00PM, Hampton City Hall, 22 Lincoln St. 5th floor and we welcome guests. FYI—A sign language interpreter is available at our meetings if you are hearing challenged.

AMAZING TRIVIA FACT

What was the first book printed in Braille by the National Library Service???? Hint: It was a biography of a former U.S. President written by a future President.

ANSWER: George Washington: A Profile by Woodrow Wilson. Originally published in 1896, it was printed in Braille in 1932 under the Library of Congress's newly launched Books for the Adult Blind project. It was selected as the Project's first book to commemorate the Bicentennial of Washington's birth.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF

1. Look directly at the person while speaking
2. Speak slowly and clearly; but do not exaggerate your speech as this will make speech reading more difficult. REMEMBER THAT NOT ALL DEAF PEOPLE CAN READ LIPS!
3. Get the deaf person's attention before speaking. This may mean a tap on the shoulder, wave of the hand or other visual signal.
4. Pantomime body language and facial expression are important – use all of them when communicating.
5. Try to maintain eye contact with the deaf person. Eye contact helps convey the feeling of direct communication.
6. Re-phrase a thought rather than repeat the same words
7. Use paper and pencil, if necessary, but keep sentences short and concise.
8. Remember that intelligence, personality, age of onset of deafness, language background, listening skills, lip reading skills and speech abilities all vary with each deaf person, just as the skills and personality of every person vary.
9. EVERY DEAF PERSON WILL COMMUNICATE IN A DIFFERENT WAY. Some will use sign language or speech only; some will use sign language, finger spelling and speech; some will write; some will use body language and facial expression to help their communication.

HOW TO WORK WITH AN INTERPRETER



1. Speak directly to the hearing impaired person, avoid using phrases "tell her/him".
2. Focus your attention on the hearing impaired person, not the interpreter.
3. Avoid asking the interpreter his/her opinions – the interpreter is an impartial party.
4. Ask the hearing impaired person about the best seating arrangement
5. Speak at a rate that is natural for you. The interpreter will inform you if it is necessary to change your rate of speech.
6. Be at ease.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

- Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day
- Avoid sugary drinks. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods (particularly processed foods high in added sugar, or low in fiber, or high in fat)
- Eat more of a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes such as beans.
- Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats.
- If consumed at all, limit alcoholic drinks to 2 for men and 1 for women a day.
- Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium)
- Don't use supplements to protect against cancer.
- And always remember--- do not smoke or chew tobacco

TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS A DISABILITY

1. Don't apologize if you use an expression such as "I must be running along" or "See you later" if the person is partially sighted. These expressions are part of everyday language and the apology will probably be more offensive or embarrassing than the expression.
2. For a wheelchair user, their wheelchair is part of their body and personal space and should be treated as such. Do not rest your foot on their wheelchair, or touch their wheelchair unless you have been asked to. Never move a person's wheelchair while they are in it unless you have asked to. This can be very dangerous as people with a fine sense of balance can very easily fall out of their wheelchair if not warned before being moved. If you think someone in a wheelchair needs assistance, always ask before taking any action.
3. Never slap a disabled person on the back or thigh as a goodwill gesture. This can cause a person to lose their balance or trigger muscle spasms which can lead to the person falling out of their chair. Muscle spasms are uncontrollable movements in the body due to a damaged spinal cord and can be uncomfortable and painful.
4. If you are unsure of something about a disabled person, which is relevant to a current situation, ask the disabled person to clarify your query. It is in the disabled person's interest to inform you of any special requirements they may have or if they need any specialized assistive techniques. For example, most quadriplegics require some assistance when eating, whether it is just cutting up their food or helping with getting food to their mouths.
5. If you have children, they will stare, it's part of their nature. Talk to the child about the disabled person and help them understand why people use wheelchairs. This helps prevent fearful and negative attitudes towards disabled people. I am used to children staring at my wheelchair, and I see it as part of their education as they often do not know any better, unlike adults who should!

And last but not least, look beyond the chair, there is a person in front of you, not a disability.

APRIL IS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

This brain condition has increased
dramatically in recent years!

I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE BLACK, WHITE,
STRAIGHT, BI LATERAL, DISABLED, GAY,
LESBIAN, SHORT, TALL, FAT, SKINNY,
RICH OR POOR-----You're nice to me, I'll
be nice to you- IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT!!!



ACCESS VIRGINIA



Access Virginia is a newly established 501©3 non-profit organization established to provide and promote accessibility at performing arts theaters as well as other venues for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Blind/Visually Impaired Communities, to experience the wonder of live theater and to create tangible positive changes in their lives.

Live theater is a great way to enjoy an afternoon or evening with a spouse, friend or group of people, it's therapeutic in ways, rich in culture, the singing is magnificent, superb acting, the vibrant costume and the drama is captivating, you experience a mix of emotions; crying, laughing, suspense, and it's thrilling.

No one need be excluded from such experiences, and through open captioning and audio description accommodations, the Deaf and hard of hearing and the blind/visually impaired populations of Virginia can now have access to live theater and other public venues.

Open Captioning is a speech-to-text display to provide a simultaneous transcription of dialogue, lyrics and a description of environmental sounds for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing used at performing arts venues for scripted plays, displayed through an LED Board.

This service can be used by everyone for viewing in a reserved seating area. Open captioning is considered a universal accommodation because it can be used by anyone regardless of hearing impairment, age or ability.

Audio Description involves the accessibility of the visual images of theater. Audio describers provide a narration service which guides the listener through the presentation with concise, objective descriptions of scenes, settings, costumes, body language slipped in between the natural pause of dialogue or songs - those images that a person who is blind or visually impaired formerly could only experience through the whispered asides from a sighted companion.

Access Virginia Accessibility Programs (AVAP) makes attending live theatre possible for everyone. Why is providing these assistive technologies important? Under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), both the facility and the presenter/producer have a legal obligation to provide effective communication for someone with a disability that does not fundamentally alter the nature of the product being offered or cause an undue burden to the venue. As cited in the ADA Technical Assistance Manual, open captioning and audio description are examples of auxiliary aids and services that promote effective communication for people who are hard of hearing, Deaf and visually impaired.

Please visit our website at accessvirginia.info, become a member of our organization or be a sponsor to help Access Virginia begin to open doors to live theater for everyone. In addition, please spread the word! And feel free to contact us for more information.

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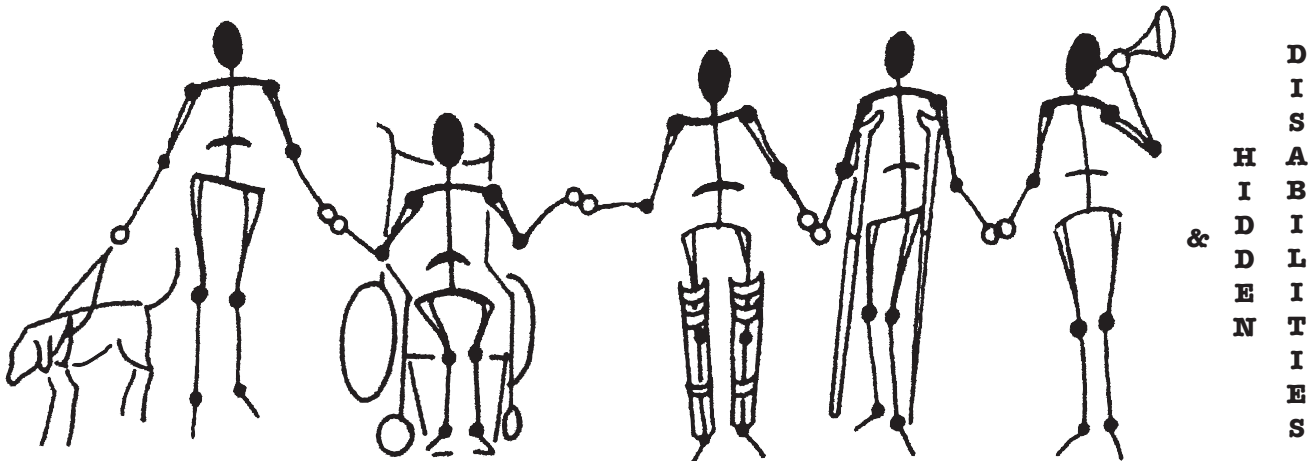
This newsletter is published quarterly, four times a year: Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. This newsletter was established to serve the disabled population and to enhance public awareness by publishing interesting and informative articles that will specifically address the needs and interests of the disabled. We welcome your comments and suggestions concerning future articles. We reserve the right to edit all articles. We are not afraid of offering controversial views for the benefit of our readers. Consequently, views and interests presented will not necessarily be the opinions of the editors or of the members of the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

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for making these newsletters possible.*

**If you receive more than
one newsletter, please pass
the extra copy to a friend!**

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to our mailing list, please contact Jeanne at 757-826-0762.*



If we all work together, we can win the battle.